

Trent Concrete barges its way to swift completion



For the first time ever, Trent Concrete has fixed its precast panels by working on water from a river barge. These challenging logistics formed part of a £1.9m contract to clad a stunning rotunda arts and office development - with Trent pulling out all the stops to deliver on time.

Bound on two sides by the Regent's Canal, Kings Place, on York Way in London's Kings Cross/St Pancras area posed one rather wet logistical problem. In order to move the precast panels to the waterside edges of the build, they needed a boat.

Project:	Kings Place, London
Client:	Parabola Land
Architect:	Dixon Jones
Contractor:	Sir Robert McAlpine
Products:	4,000 square metres of Jura limestone faced precast units to all external elevations, plus 300 square metres of handset Jura limestone at the lower levels
Completion date:	Summer 2008



▮ This was a very interesting job to work on with Sir Robert McAlpine, the main contractor. Architecturally it is a stunning build, but from a production perspective it was incredibly demanding working with curved Jura Limestone to a high quality specification and on site we were working on water. ▮

David Walker,
Managing Director,
Trent Concrete



Music to London's ears

As well as office space and retail units, Kings Place incorporates the first concert hall built in London since the Barbican Centre in 1982 - with the opening festival set for October 2008.

Home to the London Sinfonietta and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the striking building houses two halls - a 420 seat concert hall and a 220 seat flexible performance space.



The Brief

Architect Dixon Jones - which also lays claim to the refurbishment of the Royal Opera House and the National Gallery - specified Jura limestone for its aesthetic beauty.

The distinctive material was quarried and produced in Germany to Trent's specifications, and then shipped over to Trent's factory, where it was crafted into a series of bespoke, curved panels.

Furthermore, the programme demanded a unique logistics solution that made best use of the surrounding waterways.

Solution

Posing the perfect solution, the panels were taken from the delivery lorry and transported by barge to the build site. From there they were lifted out and fixed to the building using a crane.

In total, 4,000 square metres of Jura limestone faced precast units were fixed to all external elevations, with an additional 300 square metres of handset Jura limestone at the lower levels.

The spandrel and mullion cladding scheme included 300 individual units, with typical spandrel panels measuring 8m long by 1.2m high and typical mullion panels measuring 2m wide by 3m high. The panel arrangement formed double height apertures with curtain walling infill panels in glazed and solid sections.

Benefits

The certainty of Trent's off-site construction methods allowed it to easily commit to a tight and challenging programme. This ensured the finished products were ready on a just in time basis and able to be fixed to the structure direct from the barges.

As well as saving valuable site storage space and reducing the risk of on-site damage, Trent's precise delivery and installation methods avoid the need for costly site scaffolding and associated site preliminaries.

It is a comprehensive turnkey package that offers designers true creative freedom, combined with all the benefits of an affordable and highly durable product.